



US005353335A

United States Patent [19][11] **Patent Number:** 5,353,335

D'Urso et al.

[45] **Date of Patent:** Oct. 4, 1994[54] **MULTILINGUAL PREPAID TELEPHONE SYSTEM**

[75] **Inventors:** Anthony D. D'Urso, Long Valley; Orlando S. King, Edison; Arthur G. Martin, Bernardsville; Christine P. Peterson, Fords; David G. Unger, Morristown, all of N.J.

[73] **Assignee:** AT&T Bell Laboratories, Murray Hill, N.J.

[21] **Appl. No.:** 923,645

[22] **Filed:** Aug. 3, 1992

[51] **Int. Cl.⁵** H04M 17/00

[52] **U.S. Cl.** 379/67; 379/155; 379/88; 379/143

[58] **Field of Search** 379/155, 88, 143, 154, 379/144, 112, 114, 126, 121, 123

[56] **References Cited****U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS**

4,224,472	9/1980	Zarount	379/123
4,706,275	11/1987	Kamil	379/144
4,813,065	3/1989	Segala	379/112
4,879,744	11/1989	Tasaki	379/144
4,935,956	6/1990	Hellwarth	379/112
5,007,077	4/1991	Field	379/67
5,014,301	5/1991	Maltezos	379/155
5,109,401	4/1992	Hattori	379/112
5,134,646	7/1992	Carlson	379/67

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

VIP Debit Card—You Will Find It Convenient Even You Speak In Taiwanese. Feb. 28, 1992 China Times.
VIP Debit Card—A Great Advantage for U.S./Canada Travelers.

"No Language Barriers Here," Voice Processing Magazine, Mar. 1992.

New Arrival Announcement, "VIP Debit Card."

Primary Examiner—James L. Dwyer

Assistant Examiner—Michael Lau

Attorney, Agent, or Firm—Eugene S. Indyk

[57] **ABSTRACT**

A prepaid telephone system having multilingual capabilities is provided in a public switched telephone network. A telephone user buys a predetermined amount of service beforehand and receives a card imprinted with a unique account number. A plurality of toll free access telephone numbers allows the user to access the prepaid telephone system. Each of those telephone numbers causes the prepaid system to interact with the user in the language in which he or she wishes the system to operate. The user is prompted in the chosen language to enter his or her card number. The authenticity of the number and the available credit is determined. If there is a certain minimum amount of credit available, the user is prompted to enter the phone number of a desired party. The user may also dial a speed dialing alias which connects the user to special services including news, weather, travel, translation, and other services. If the user has enough available credit to pay for at least a minimal amount of calling time, the call is completed. A timer is set with an amount of calling time permitted by the available balance. The timer runs during the course of the phone call and the call is disconnected when the timer runs out. If the call is ended prior to the timer running out, a new available balance is computed in light of the time remaining on the timer. The user can make additional phone calls using the new available credit balance.

34 Claims, 11 Drawing Sheets

